

Building Airports for an Aging Population

Transportation Research Board Conference

January 13, 2003

Agenda

- Problem statement
- Senior perspective and market
- Implications of aging on airport design
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
- Implementation Actions

Problem Statement

- Seniors are having trouble using airports
- If we don't do something we could alienate 20% of the travelling public

The Senior Perspective

- Don't want to be considered disabled
- Cherish independence



The Senior Market: 2000

- 35 million people 65 or older in United States
- 13 - 14 million air trips by seniors

Source: Census 2000 and
American Travel Survey

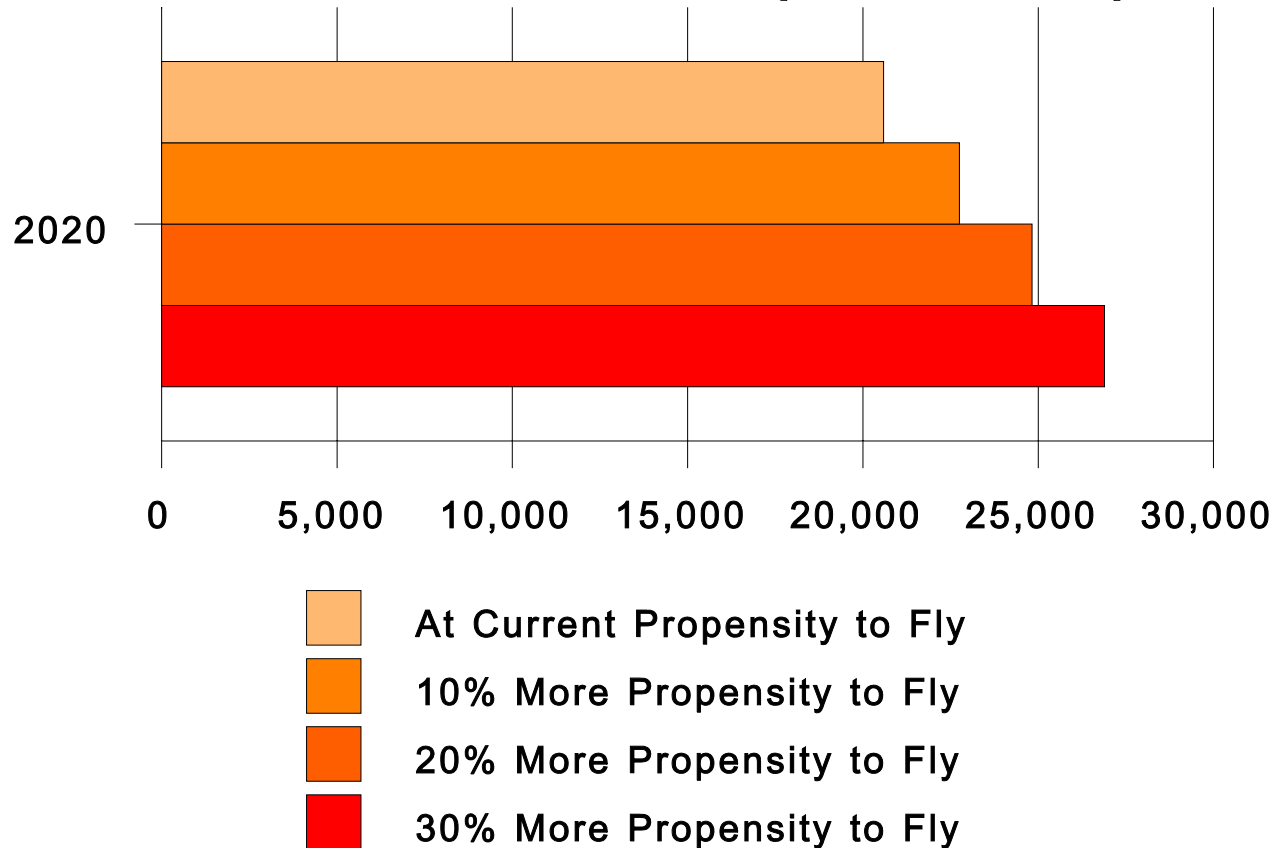
The Senior Market: 2020

- 54 million people 65 or older in United States
- 21 million air trips by seniors

Source: Census Bureau Projections and trend projection of senior air trips

Impact of Increase in Senior Propensity to Fly

Senior Air Trips 2020 (Thousands)



Implications of Aging on Airport Design

- Mobility → *Walking*
- Strength → *Waiting/lifting*
- Sight → *Signage*
- Hearing → *Messages*
- Touch → *Vending machines*
- Cognition → *Way-finding*

Discriminating Colors

Normal Vision



French market scene viewed with no color deficiency

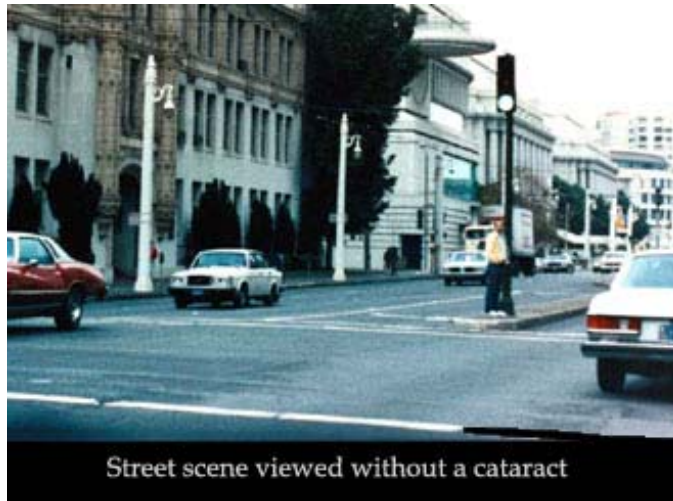
Abnormal Vision



French market scene viewed with xanthopsia

Cataract Problems

Normal Vision



Abnormal Vision



Focus Group Identified Three Concerns

- Way-finding
- Walking
- Waiting

Way-finding Issue: Reading Signage

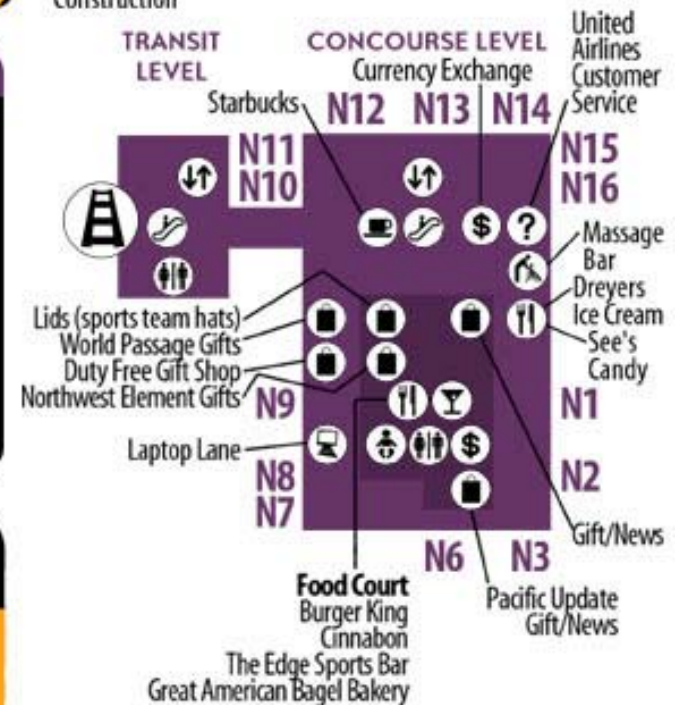
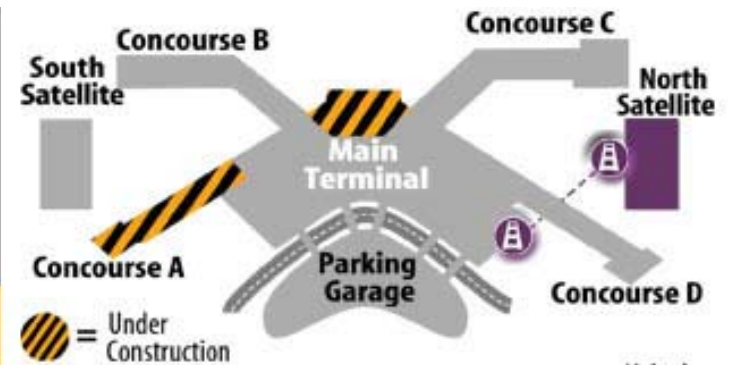


Way-finding Issue: Clarity of Maps



| SYMBOL KEY | | |
|------------------------------------|---|---------------------|
| Airline Customer Service | Elevator between gate area & Transit Level | Lounge |
| Cash Machine/ATM/Currency Exchange | Escalator between gate area & Transit Level | Massage Bar |
| Coffee | Family Restroom | Restrooms |
| Computer Services | Food | Retail |
| | Transit Stop | Visitor Information |

Need Help? You'll find volunteers (in blue shirts or jackets) and Pathfinders (in red shirts or jackets) throughout the airport.



Way-finding Issue: Hearing Announcements



Way-finding Issue: Volunteers to Guide You



Walking Issue: Distance



Walking Issue: Mobility Aids

- Carts
- Moving sidewalks
- Elevators
- Escalators



Walking Issues (cont.)

- Independence



- Grade Change



Waiting at Security



Waiting at Gate Check-in



Waiting Boarding Aircraft



Waiting at Baggage Claim



Conclusions

- Seniors need to be recognized as a distinct market niche
- Way-finding is the chief problem confronting seniors at airports
- No amount of signage can replace the human touch



Recommendations

- Apply research to identify the implications of aging on airport design
- Develop airport design and air travel standards for seniors based on this research

Implementation Actions

- Establish a group to spearhead the effort
- Develop a handbook on enhancing the air travel experience for an aging population
- Distribute handbook to all stakeholders

A Parting Thought

“Just because you can’t run as fast, jump as high, or throw as far doesn’t mean that you still shouldn’t be able to play the game.”

Harry P. Wolfe, January 2003

For More Information

Contact:
Harry P. Wolfe
Information Services
hwolfe@mag.maricopa.gov

(602) 254-6300
www.mag.maricopa.gov